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## Rosicrucian Aphorisms and Process - Bacstrom

Elsewhere on this site I have included a transcription of an admission of membership into a Rosicrucian Society organised from London by Dr Sigismund Bacstrom.

Bacstrom had been initiated into a Rosicrucian society by the Comte de Chazal on the Island of Mauritius in 1791. The Comte de Chazal was connected with the French stream of Rosicrucianism probably linking back to the Comte de St Germain.

The text of the admission of membership was taken from the copy made by a Scotsman, Alexander Tilloch, contained in the Ferguson collection, and it has appended to it the following most interesting section of *Rosicrucian Aphorisms and Process*, which I transcribe in its entirety. This process seems of great value as it is in the tradition of earlier alchemical texts, concealing its prima materia and yet explaining all the subsequent stages in great detail, while using the exact chemical terminology of the 18th century. Thus, for example, it has precise measurements of temperature for the stages of the process, using Fahrenheit's thermometer, and precise measurements of quantities. Such quantitative details are often missing in early alchemical texts. It also uses a great deal of Hebrew nomenclature and parallels with the creation story in Genesis.

It is remarkable that this work, written at the end of the 18th century, should remain in the same archetypal mold as works of some three centuries earlier, and this I believe shows us the inner integrity of this alchemical process of the red and the white tones through the nigredo, putrefaction and peacock's tail stages, with the final potentisation through multiplication of the tincture. This process, a source of alchemical inspiration for half a millennium and more, contains mysteries that have still to be revealed and I hope that this further piece of material might help to make this process more clear.

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**In Nomine Dei Omnipotentis,  
qui nobis elementia sua tanta Dona largiri voluit!  
Cui sit gloria et laus sempereternus  
Amen.**

## **APHORISMI**

### **Operis maximi Antiquorum Sapientium**

1. The soul of Man as well as all rational Spirits (the Angels) consist (according to their primitive Essence) of the Spirit of the World or Anima Mundi and the power of reasoning. They are Unities and most simple, and consequently in their very essence immortal.

2. In the Beginning God created the Universal Spirit or the Universal Agent of Nature, the Soul of the Universe. This is the first emanation of Divine Light; it is a unity and immortal, capable of manifesting itself, when moved or agitated, into Light and Fire. It is multipliable and yet is and remains but one. It is Omnipresent and yet occupies no visible space or room, except when manifested or multiplied in its third principle, Fire. It has the power of becoming material and of returning again to universality.

This is the subject of the Stone or Medicine of the Philosophers. The more you take this in its simple, universal, unspecified or unmarried state, the easier, simpler and greater is your work, but the more this subject is already specified the more troublesome prolix and expensive is your process.

3. Our Magnet to attract it (although every subject in Nature is Magnetical) is Man, and principally (Hadamah, the Dust, red earth of Man), which in the months of March, April and May, the Sun in Aries and Taurus is abundantly found in the blood of a healthy man; the Spirit of the Universe during this season residing therein most abundantly, universally and unspecified.

Hadamah signifies the first man Adam or Red Earth, which appears when the subject is dried up. In Hadamah lies concealed the blood that precious fluid wherein dwells the Universal Spirit, attracted by inspiration, and the Dust of the Red Earth, left by itself when the Universal fire nature quits it.

This Universal Fire is truly Nature.

4. The happy success depends on the subject being good, from a young man, if possible of a Jovial Temper or Choleric, in good health, collected in a proper season, which is in March, April and, at farthest, in May, while the Sun is in Aries and Taurus: best after Northerly winds have prevailed.

## PROCESS

This is the first of all Works, the most simple, the least expensive, the easiest and the greatest in its effects. There are various works and different processes, but this is the oldest.

1st. The subject contains fire, air, water and earth, and requires no addition of any foreign matter, except when introduced into the metallic department.

It contains the fire of Nature, or the Universal Spirit, with Air its vehicle it contains Water, which must be separated from it in the beginning of the work and also earth which remains behind in the form of caput mortuum, where the fire has left it, and is the true Red Earth wherein the fire dwelt for a while.

The subject, duly collected, should not be less than eight nor more than sixteen ounces: place it in a china or glazed basin and cover it loosely to keep the dust out.

2nd. In five or six hours time the first natural separation is made: the water is carefully poured off as useless and pernicious.

(This water is called the Waters of the Deluge, which are not easily dried up.)

The cold subject is placed in a double piece of clean linen in a clean china basin, in order that the superfluous water may be soaked up or absorbed by the linen, and that the cake may become dry, in a cool shady place, free from dust. This superfluous water would retard and hinder putrefaction, which is the key to regeneration.

3rd. As soon as the Cake is freed from all superfluous humidity, cut it to pieces with an ivory knife (do not touch it with any metal) and put it by means of a glass funnel into your Globe Glass.

4th. The globe glass is immediately to be shut with a stopper made of oak, which fits nicely, in order that the superfluous remaining humidity (the phlegm) may,

during the putrefaction, penetrate and evaporate through the pores of the oak.

The joining of the neck and the stopper must be luted with something that is able to resist outward warmth and moisture.

5th. Place your luted globe glass or glasses (for it is most prudent to work with five or six glasses at once, from as many different good subjects) in a hogshead or wine pipe, filled two-thirds full with horse dung already in proper fermentation, so as to show a degree of heat from 120 to 140 or 150 degrees by Fahrenheit's thermometer. The greatest heat is in the middle, where it is generally from 140 to 150 degrees: less heat is round the staves where it varies from 90 to 100 and from that to 120 degrees.

Your horse dung must be procured before, as it takes sometimes five, six or more days before it ferments and gives the necessary heat. This is soon discovered by the steam arising from it, and by the thermometer buried in it nine or ten inches deep.

You must have two hogsheads or casks, in order to prepare a second before the fermenting heat has entirely left the first; which heat seldom lasts longer than three weeks; as your work must never become cold one single moment.

You must cover the top with clean straw pretty thick, and also all round the casks, especially in winter, or the work will be too cold and your operation will be very much retarded, if not fail.

6th. Your bath thus previously prepared, and your glasses well luted and varnished all round the joining of the neck and stopper, except the surface of the oak, bury them in the bath all round the cask, where the gentlest heat prevails, deep enough that only the upper part of the neck and stopper, that which is luted, may be in sight or level with the surface of the bath. If they were buried in the middle in the beginning of the work your subject would dry up instead of liquefying and putrefying.

7th. Every morning and night take out your glasses and shake them gently every one, by a circular motion, in order to promote the solution of the red earth, which is generally effected in two or three weeks time. The whole earth dissolves into a deep ruby-red liquid, called by us Aqua Permanens or Chaos.

After this liquefaction is accomplished the glasses are shaken no more, it being then unnecessary.

8th. In this manner, pursuing this most simple process, moving your glasses from one cask into the other, as often as your heat ceases, you must proceed with your horse dung bath during eight or nine months time, sometimes longer, as the exact time cannot be ascertained by any one (the philosophers say "coque nec desine coquere") taking care never to suffer your work to become cold, so that the glasses may feel cold, not for one moment, as in that case your labour would be lost. The surface of your oak stoppers will turn black and moist from the penetrating flegm. This causes the stoppers to swell and will burst the neck of every one of the globe-glasses, if you have not previously secured those necks with strips of linen pasted round them, and harpsichord wire wound over the linen, with a varnish over the whole, and with lute where the stopper joins the upper brim of the neck. This lute may be sealing wax dropped on (all round) by a burning candle, or rosin, or quick drying varnish, thickened with filings of iron, or any other good luting that can withstand warmth and moisture; but take care to keep the bottom of the stopper in sight, by not covering the neck of the glass quite so low as to hide it.

9th. After liquefaction of the subject, putrefaction takes place immediately. At first you see veins resembling Mercury running down from the neck to the permanent ruby water. After those veins or streams are vanished the Peacock's Tail begins to appear all round the globe, sometimes coloured like the Rainbow, sometimes purple, green, nay Gold and Silver colours, most wonderfully beautiful, present themselves.

10th. During putrefaction, which generally lasts 150 days, sometimes longer, the subject smells through the stopper like a human corpse; sometimes so strongly as to be smelled all over the house; and the colours variegate most beautifully.

11th. After this putrefaction, which is called the Raven's-head, and which generally lasts 150 days or longer, has continued its time, the stench diminishes gradually, and the subject becomes a dry brick-red coloured earth, red earth, or dust, which remains settled at the bottom of the glass. This must not be moved nor disturbed.

12th. Then sublimation takes place. the Universal Spirit forsakes the dead body the red earth, ascends and descends invisibly and now produces general colours of

large extent; one day the globe is black, some days after it becomes olive-green; after that sky-blue and beautiful parrot-green; then again purple or violet and crimson, mostly in general colours all round the globe. with beautiful small gold, silver, green and purple spots in the neck, like a Peacock's Tail or a Rainbow. Sometimes it looks like polished copper, then like polished steel, and sometimes like bell-metal.

13th. After eight or nine months all appears white or, rather, like running mercury, of a metallic colour, and the Universal Spirit sublimes and fixes itself at the bottom of the oak stopper in the neck, and remains there for three or four weeks, as white as Silver; and is the regenerated Universal Spirit, corporified in a sweet fusible salt of Nature, above half fixed.

Below remains a foliated earth of a grey colour, called by us Terra foliata, which is of no use if you choose to take this white salt or sublimate out for multiplication, in order to make the White Medicine; but if you prefer continuing the Digestion, you must by no means open the glass nor meddle with it.

This white sublimate from one glass will not be more than three, four, five or six grains at most.

You have now in your possession the Corporified Spirit of the Universe, the Regenerated Fire of Nature, the Saviour and Regenerator of matter, or the White Medicine in its first infant state, the Urim or Regenerated Light. This is already a universal medicine for the animal creation, but it is to be carried further, to greater perfection.

This sweet salt or sublimate looks like copelled silver, or like the Moon in the Morning.

**Process for the Red Medicine,  
or Perfected Salt of Nature.  
Thummim i.e.. Consummatum est Perfectio.**

14th. The glasses are now to be removed to the middle of the bath and kept there, as the work now requires more heat. (By Fahrenheit's thermometer the heat in the middle at the depth of 10 or 12 inches is generally from 130 to 150 degrees.)

Continue the digestion, coque nec desine coquere, renewing your horse dung every fortnight or three weeks, a few days before your heat ceases; removing your glasses from one cask into another from time to time as your heat may require.

Your White Sublimate fixed at the bottom of your

stoppers, will descend again into the red earth and from thence re-ascend, and will pass through all the former colours several times more, until it fixes itself once more at the bottom of the stopper (by us called querca domus) and becomes first of a saffron colour, but in the course of a few weeks more of a fiery-red colour.

This business from the White to the Red, requires sometimes three or four months, but the exact time cannot be determined.

Now you are in possession of Thummim, Consummatum est, of Moses and Aaron.

15th. During the first and second digestion the subject dries and liquefies several times and undergoes many changes of colours, which appear all round the globe and in the neck of the glass, and never cease until the red sublimate is brought to perfection.

There remains again an earth, the Dust or red earth which is of no further use, being now totally deprived of fire, which is life.

(Admire the simplicity and truth by which the subject and this primitive dust is plainly declared in the words 'The dust or red earth of Man' as well as the Magnet.)

**First Multiplication of the Red Medicine  
in Quality and Power, by the Metallic  
radical humidity; and its specification  
towards Mineral Nature  
for Transmutation.**

16th. There are only three Universal passive fluids or humidities in Nature. These three, centrally, are very analogous to each other.

For the Animal Kingdom the animal fluid or Blood is appointed, for the Vegetable Kingdom water, and for the Mineral Mercury, which is the radical humidity of metals.

Each of these three fluids contains fire, water, earth - Soul, spirit and body, sulphur, mercury, salt. From each of these fluids, if properly treated and duly animated by the Universal Spirit a Universal Medicine may be made. Now in order to specify towards Metallic Nature, your Universal regenerated Spirit or Salt, the White or Red Medicine, proceed thus:

17th. Take four parts of the White or the Red Medicine, and ten parts of highly purified Mercury (best revived from Cinnabar) and make an amalgam as follows:

Put the very accurately weighed ten parts of Mercury in a

small china tea cup, or in a small smooth crucible, on a gentle charcoal fire, and let it stand until the Mercury begins to fume. Take it that moment from the fire (avoid breathing the fumes) and at the same instant add the four parts of the White or the Red Medicine (previously enveloped in softened wax) to the just fuming hot Mercury. Stir it with a clean solid glass rod and you will have an amalgam.

The multiplication is performed according to the table of Pythagoras [the Tetractys]; the ratio of one side of the equilateral triangle to the whole figure, thus. That is, 4 parts of the Medicine to 10 parts of the metallic water.

### **Process of Digestion with the Metallic Water or Ferment.**

18th. This amalgam is put immediately into a small globe glass, of sufficient strength (the neck previously secured with linen, wire and varnish to prevent it from bursting), not above 2 inches in diameter, or of such a capacity that the amalgam may fill no more than one fourth part of the globe in height. If the globe, however, be a little larger there will no harm: it is better a little too big than too small.

Secure your glass with an oak stopper, and lute it exactly as you did before.

19th. Place it in your bath, but now in the middle, where the greatest heat is, in 140 or 150 degrees. Bury it in the horse dung so deep that the stopper may be a little under the surface of the bath.

20th. Do not move it except when you are obliged to place it in the other cask.

By degrees the Universal Medicine unites radically with the Metallic water, and becomes in two or three months time, if the white sublimate has been employed, a silver white tinging Medicine, a dry substance extremely fusible, in one solid mass, after having passed through all the colours: but if the Red Medicine has been employed it becomes a Red tinging Metallic Medicine, which looks in the dark like a glowing or fiery coal.

This is the more perfect and multiplied Urim if the White, Thummim (consummatum est), if the Red Medicine. Aaron wore them both in his breastplate.

21st. Both these medicines, the White as well as the Red, when perfectly fixed remain at the bottom of the globe-glass, and must be carefully separated from the earth or

caput mortuum of the Mercury underneath it, sticking to the bottom of the glass under the medicine. It is necessary to break off the neck of the glass.

22nd. Both Medicines once multiplied or fermented with the metallic radical humidity (Mercury) do not require any further fermentation with gold; but tinge already, after this first multiplication.

One part of the White Medicine tinges 10 parts of mercury, lead, tin, copper, and iron into pure silver of 16 fine.

One part of the Red Medicine, once multiplied, tinges 10 parts of Mercury, lead, silver, tin, copper and silver into pure gold of 24 carats fine.

The metallic medicines tinge each metal in proportion as they abound in Mercury, therefore Mercury itself in the greatest quantity, with very little loss, lead the next with a little more loss; then silver and tin; tin with more loss than lead; and lastly copper and iron with a great deal of loss and a large scorification of external metallic sulphur, as these two last metals contain but a small proportion of Mercury, which is the only metallic principle that is ameliorated and fixed.

23rd After the first multiplication with the metallic water, the White Medicine is the Urim in its first multiplied state, tinging and ameliorating the inferior metals into the purest and softest silver. The Red Medicine once multiplied with the metallic water is the Thummim in its first multiplied state - the Exalted Universal Medicine striking at the root of every acute and chronic disease of man and animals, and tinging the mercurial principle of all the inferior metals and minerals into the purest and softest gold of 24 carats.

Both medicines are soluble in rectified spirit of wine and even in water.

### **AUGMENTATION of the Medicines in Quantity not in Quality nor in Power.**

24th. If the White medicine, once multiplied, be melted with pure silver - one part of the Medicine to four parts of pure refined silver - the silver becomes a white, brittle, glassy substance. The medicine is in this way Augmented in quantity only, but not in quality nor in power, as it now tinges no more than ten parts, in the same manner as before; but you thus obtain a greater quantity of the same medicine, for Transmutation only.

25th. If the Red Medicine, once multiplied with mercury, be melted with pure refined gold, 1 part of the Medicine with 4 parts of pure gold, the gold becomes a brittle, deep orange coloured vitreous substance, and the Medicine is augmented in quantity, but not in quality nor in power; it tinges only as before, 1 part tinging ten of inferior metals into most pure gold, but you have more medicine in quantity.

The White and the Red Medicines thus fermented with silver or with gold are no longer soluble in Rectified Spirit of Wine, and much less in water, and therefore are no longer medicinal for the human body or for animals; on the contrary, they are now highly pernicious, corrosive and destructive to animal life, and also to vegetable; and they cannot be multiplied any further by the metallic humidity.

### **Second Multiplication of the Medicine viz, in Quality, by the metallic waters.**

The Second and every subsequent Multiplication of the medicine, with the metallic water (Mercury) in quality and power, is done exactly like the first, according to the table of Pythagoras, as has been mentioned and explained before.

26th. Make your amalgam as before, with the same accuracy and precaution - 4 parts of medicine to 10 parts of pure Mercury - put your amalgam in a globe glass, so that three or four parts at least remain empty; lute the neck with the oak stopper, and bury it again in the middle of your bath where the greatest heat prevails.

This process will be finished in a much shorter time than the first; and every subsequent multiplication is sooner accomplished than the foregoing, because the Multiplied medicine increases wonderfully in fusibility, the power of penetrating, and fixity, and therefore it is sooner multiplied than before.

It passes again through all the colours, dies and is regenerated as before.

This can also be done over a lamp provided your heat is nicely regulated so as to imitate that necessary, gentle animating heat of horse dung.

During the first labours of liquefaction and putrefaction, we prefer the horse dung to the lamp, as the most natural, though divers philosophers have used divers means.

27th. You will again find your exalted medicine at the

bottom of the globe upon a small caput mortuum or mercurial earth, from which Earth you must carefully separate your medicine; which is easily done as the substances are distinct enough.

Now you have the Medicine of the Second Order, more fiery than the first, and ten times more powerful. One part of this medicine tinges one hundred parts of the inferior metals into silver or gold, according as you have employed the white or the red medicine.

28th. This Medicine, infinitely more soluble, more fiery, more penetrating and powerful, can no longer be administered in substance to the human body, being too great a fire for our constitution to bear.

The Medicine of the First Order may be administered in substance, 1/4 of a grain or less for a dose; but we will give you our method how to dissolve and administer our medicine with safety.

29th. The third, fourth and fifth Multiplication, always with the pure metallic water or Mercury, is performed exactly in the same manner as the first and second, but each succeeding multiplication is sooner performed than the foregoing.

We do not know that ever a philosopher ventured so far as the Fifth, as we truly believe that so fusible, ingressive and penetrating a substance, which is actually fire and Light, would run through every glass.

30th The Medicine, whether White or Red, of the First Order, of the First Multiplication with Mercury, tinges ten times its weight.

The Medicine after the Second Multiplication tinges one hundred times its weight.

After the Third multiplication one part tinges one thousand parts.

After the Fourth Multiplication one part tinges ten thousand parts.

After the Fifth Multiplication one part, one hundred thousand parts; that is, one single grain would produce 171b 4oz of silver or gold.

(Who can comprehend the incalculable fire of Nature!  
infinitely multipliable!)

### **Method of safely administering the Medicine to the Human Body.**

31st. Take four ounces of the purest, most highly rectified Spirit of Wine (not Corn spirit) dissolve therein, without

heat, or at most only in the Sun's heat, one grain of the First, Second or Third multiplied Red Medicine, and, observing well the colour of the Tincture thus formed, add a second or a third grain (according to the power of your medicine) and fourth or fifth, or more, until your Spirit of Wine becomes tinged of a translucent Ruby colour, like Burgundy Wine - then cease to add any more of the Medicine.

The Medicine of the Third Order will sooner tinge the Spirit of Wine sufficiently deep than that of the First.

This Heavenly Essence is the Highest and most Universal Aurum Potabile of the earliest ages.

With this glorious Essence we tinge a pint of Madiera or Lisbon or good old Rhenish Wine, dropping our Ruby Essence into the White Wine until the latter become of a deep orange or pale Burgundy, or deep Malaga colour, and appears so in a two ounce phial.

This medicinal wine may safely and without the least danger be given to both sexes, and of all ages in every disease whether the disease be hot or cold, acute or chronic, makes no difference.

A teaspoonful may be given for a dose, once or twice in 24 hours, in dangerous acute, or obstinate chronic diseases, cancers and the like; but in slight cases one dose only will effect the cure.

32nd. The Red Medicine, thrice multiplied, placed in a glass globe, with a stopper luted in, and suspended in a room, gives light in the dark like a fiery coal.

33rd. The White Medicine, after the First Multiplication, coagulates and fixes a tumbler or glass full of clear water into a rock crystal. Put grain after another into the water until a disturbance is observed to take place in the water; then cease, and in half an hour the glass will break leaving the crystal fixed.

34th. The same White Medicine projected on glass in fusion, leaves the glass, when cold, perfectly ductile and maleable.

35th. With the Red multiplied Medicine, glass fluxes or crystals are fixed into diamonds, rubies, emeralds and other precious stones.

### **Concerning the Globe-glasses.**

The glasses are globular digesting glasses, of five, or at most six, inches in diameter, with a neck five or six

inches in length and wide enough to admit your thumb or at least your middle finger.

You must make stoppers of fine grained, very dry Oak, to fit nicely into the necks which should be ground in the inside a little way so as to form a nice round hole for the stopper: the stopper should go into the neck one inch deep, and should leave one inch above the neck.

The globes for multiplication are about two inches in diameter, with necks three or four inches long and wide enough to admit a finger.

All the glasses should be made of considerable strength - at least one eighth of an inch in substance.

### **SUPPLEMENT to the foregoing Aphorisms.**

If the globes containing the subjects be three, four or more times electrified in the beginning, before you put them in the bath; so as to introduce the Electrical Universal principle, or the Universal Spirit of Nature into the subject by motion, the same spirit in the subject will be greatly strengthened, the operation will be accelerated and improved, and you will obtain an increase of the first White salt or sublimate below the Oak stoppers.

Above I have faithfully communicated our Aphorisms.

London 5th April 1797

Sigismund Bacstrom

M.D. F.R.C.

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If you have problems understanding these alchemical texts, Adam McLean now provides a study course entitled [How to read alchemical texts : a guide for the perplexed.](#)

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